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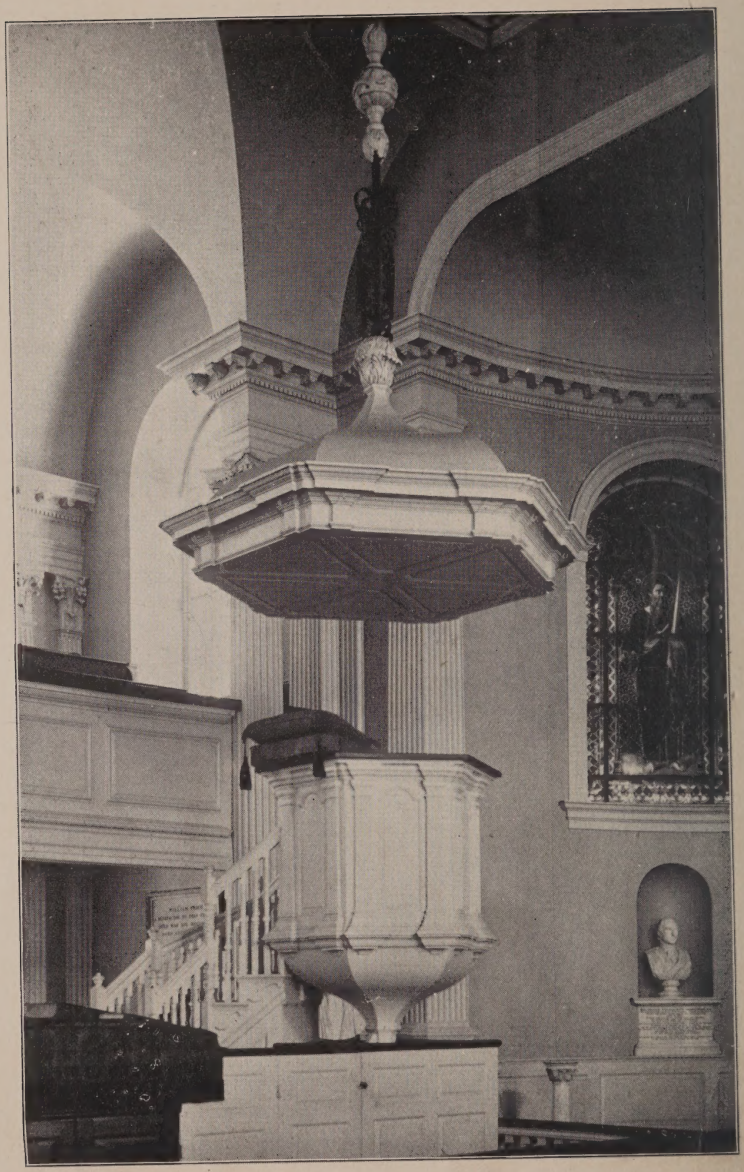

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A BRIEF SKETCH

OF THE

HISTORY

OF

KING'S CHAPEL.

1898

Minister.

REV. HOWARD N. BROWN.

Wardens.

MR. ARTHUR T. LYMAN.

MR. CHARLES P. CURTIS.

Choir.

MR. B. J. LANG, *Organist.*

MRS. ALICE BATES RICE, *Soprano.* MR. W. J. WINCH, *Tenor.*

MISS LENA LITTLE, *Alto.* MR. MAX HEINRICH, *Bass.*

Services.

SUNDAY, 10.30 A.M.	Regular Morning Service.
SUNDAY, 3.30 P.M.	Musical Service with short sermon. All seats are free, and the public is cordially invited.
WEDNESDAY, 12 M.	Half-hour Mid-week Service conducted by Ministers of different denominations. All seats free.

Regular Services Christmas Day and Good Friday, 11 A.M.

Daily Services during the week before Easter, of which special announcement is made.

Miss Warren

July 28, 1913

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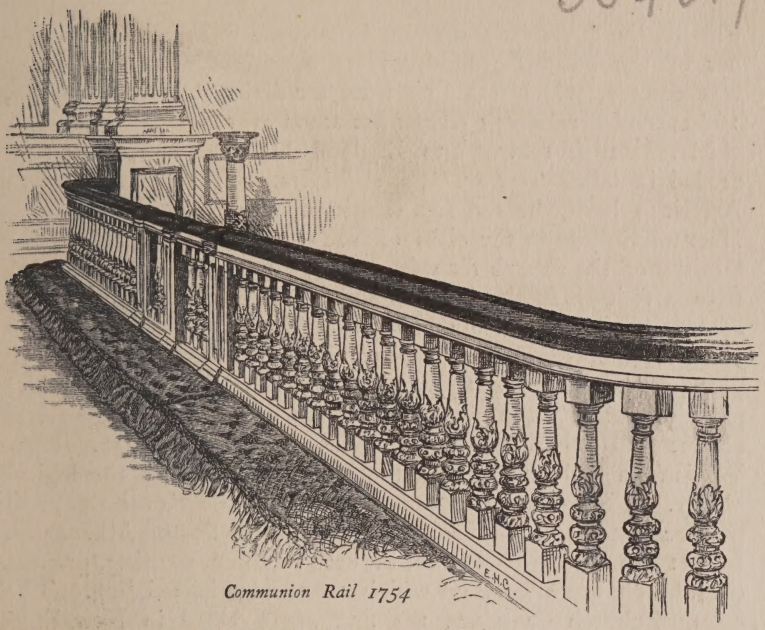


Communion Rail 1754

KING'S CHAPEL, so called because during the colonial period it represented in Boston the State Church of England, and was the place where successive Royal Governors were accustomed to worship, was founded June 15, 1686. It was the first Episcopal church in New England. In the early days of the colony there were laws against the solemnization of marriages by any save civil magistrates, and other laws denouncing fines against those who should be found observing "any such day as Christmas or the like." From the first the new church was a powerful influence in softening the hard manners and customs of Puritanism.

The first minister was Rev. Robert Ratcliffe, who came over from England to establish the church. He was an orator and preacher of much power, and soon won a considerable following. Services were held for some months in the town house; and then the governor, Sir Edmund Andros, compelled the officers of what is now known as the Old South to admit the new congregation to its meeting-house for service during some part of every Sunday. This joint occupancy continued, not without bitterness of feeling, for about two years. During this time the wardens were trying to secure land for the building of a church. No one possessing land suitable for the purpose would sell.

Finally, the governor and council conveyed to the church a corner of the burying-ground. Here a modest wooden building was erected, which was first used for divine service June 30, 1689; and here *King's Chapel* has stood ever since.

Mr. Ratcliffe returned to England that same year, being succeeded in office by Rev. Samuel Myles. This gentleman was American born, the son of a Baptist minister, and a graduate of Harvard College in the class of 1684. He continued to be the minister of the church for thirty-nine years. In 1696, returning from a visit to England, he brought with him substantial gifts of communion plate and altar furnishings from King William III. After this communion plate had been in use about seventy years, a new service was given by King George III. The older plate was then given away to various churches, a flagon and chalice still being held by Christ Church, Cambridge. King William, a little later, gave to the church a large theological library. This was partly scattered during the Revolution, and what remained of it was finally deposited in the Boston Athenæum. In 1710 the town of Boston, by vote in town meeting, granted the church more land on which to enlarge its building. The enlarged church contained the first organ heard in New England, the gift of Thomas Brattle, Esq., a Boston merchant. This organ was afterward taken to St. John's Church, Portsmouth, where it is still in use. One of the most important incidents of the close of Mr. Myles's ministry was the laying by him of the corner-stone of Christ Church (on Salem Street), which had been founded as an offshoot from *King's Chapel.* He died in office in 1728.

The next minister was Rev. Roger Price, "Mr. Commissary Price," as he was generally called, because he held a commission from the Bishop of London to exercise a certain oversight of the Episcopal churches, which by this time had sprung up in other parts of the colony. There was a curious ceremony at his induction into office. After his credentials had been read in church, all the people present "went out of the church, the church wardens at the door delivering the key of the church to the Rev. Mr. Price, who, locking himself into the church, tolled the bell, and then unlocked the door of the church, receiving the church wardens and vestrymen into the church again, who wished him joy upon his having possession of the church." This was the common ceremony of the time in the English Church. In 1734 Mr. Price laid the corner-stone of Trinity Church, a second offshoot from *King's Chapel.* For four years after that building was erected the minister of *King's Chapel* and his

assistant, in addition to their regular duties, held services in Trinity Church, after which time the new organization became independent of the mother church.

Mr. Price resigned in 1746; and the following year, without consulting the Bishop of London, the church chose the Rev. Henry Caner to be its minister. He had been for twenty years in charge of an Episcopal church in Fairfield, Conn. His first work was to take up and carry forward to completion the task of building a new stone church, which had been talked about for some years. Money was subscribed in Boston and in England; and the corner-stone was laid by Governor Shirley with becoming ceremony Aug. 11, 1749. The architect was Peter Harrison, an English gentleman then living in Rhode Island, after whose design the Redwood Library in Newport was also built. The building of the church took some time, and it was not occupied for worship till the summer of 1754. The pulpit of the old church was transferred to the new. This pulpit, now preached from every Sunday, was certainly made as early as 1717, though it does not appear whether it dates back to the completion of the first building in 1689. It is undoubtedly the oldest pulpit now in use in New England, in the place where it was first erected.

The pews now numbered 31 and 32 together made the Governor's Pew, which was surmounted by a canopy. Here sat in succession Governors Shirley, Pownall, Bernard, Hutchinson, and, finally, General Gage and Sir William Howe during the early part of the Revolutionary struggle. Sir Henry Frankland, the collector of customs, whose connection with the romantic story of Agnes Surriage has made his name widely known in later times, was one of the proprietors of *King's Chapel* when the present building was erected, and occupied pew number 20. In 1756 a new organ was procured from England. There is a tradition, very probably true, that this organ was selected and played upon by Handel. It is known that the great musician was an intimate friend to the king, and that the latter was much interested in *King's Chapel.* This organ has been rebuilt and enlarged from time to time, but has never been wholly removed. Its original ornaments, the mitre and crown, were taken away for a season after the Revolution, but have been since restored.

At the outbreak of hostilities between the colony and England the society worshipping in *King's Chapel* was divided. "Of seventy-three pews, thirty were occupied by Loyalists and forty-three by those of the Patriotic, or American party." Dr. Caner was devoted to the cause of the king, as was very natural

Tremont Street from Court to Bromfield in 1800.

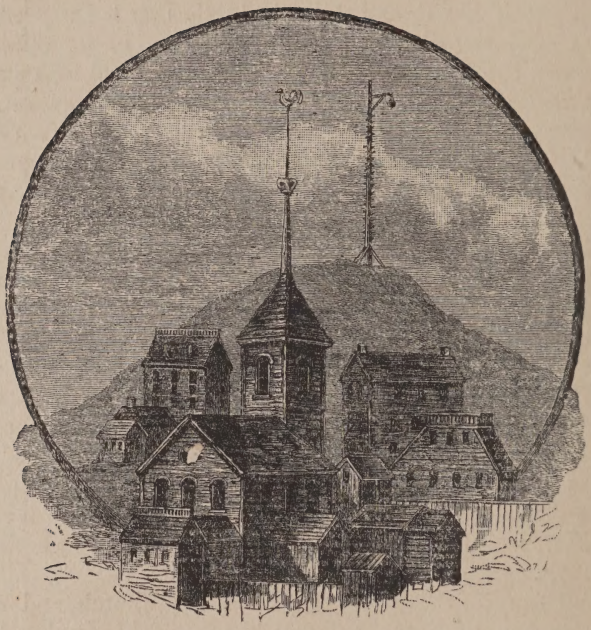
in the case of a man with his training who had come to be seventy-seven years of age. When the British troops evacuated Boston, most of these Loyalist families went with them. Dr. Caner and eighteen other clergymen of the Episcopal Church sailed away with the fleet. The minister of *King's Chapel*, influenced no doubt by a very honest but a somewhat peculiar sense of duty, took with him all the communion plate belonging to the church. This has never been recovered, and was probably distributed among other churches in America by the English Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. The assistant minister of Trinity Church being the only minister of that faith left in Boston, what remained of the *King's Chapel* congregation worshipped there for a time; and the use of the Chapel was given to the Old South Church, whose building had been made uninhabitable by the British troops. The funeral of Dr. Warren, who had been killed at Bunker Hill, was held here in April, 1776.

After the Old South congregation had gone back to its own church, the wardens of *King's Chapel* took steps to resume their interrupted services. The senior warden at this time was Dr. Thomas Bulfinch, the father of the famous architect who built the State House, and a very notable man. In 1782 the church invited Mr. James Freeman to serve for a time as lay reader. He was a young man who had preached a few times, but had never been ordained. He accepted the invitation, and thus began a ministry which lasted fifty-two years. Those who were left after the departure of the Loyalists were liberal in their tendencies, and Mr. Freeman was of the same way of thinking. The pews of the Loyalists were taken by the church, being forfeited by the conditions of the deeds under which they were held, and were sold to others. For three years Mr. Freeman continued to preach, becoming more and more decided in his opposition to the doctrinal standards of the past, until in 1785 the congregation voted to make certain changes in its Prayer Book corresponding to the alteration of its views. The work was carried out under the supervision of a committee appointed for the purpose, and the new book was published that same year. The alterations consisted largely in leaving out all refer-

ences to the Trinity. In effect, the first Episcopal church planted in New England thus declared itself the first Unitarian church in this country. Apparently, the authors of this change entertained a hope at the time that other Episcopal churches would follow their example, and did not suppose that they had created a breach between themselves and others. But when, a little later, Mr. Freeman sought ordination, in order that he might perform the marriage ceremony and administer the sacraments, it was found that no bishop would confer ordination upon him. In 1787, therefore, the church proceeded to ordain Mr. Freeman for itself, in accordance with Congregational usage; and this right it has since held so jealously that it has permitted no other church to take part in the installation of its ministers. Mr. Freeman had a long and honored ministry, and many of the foremost families of Boston belonged to his congregation. In 1789 there was a concert of sacred music in *King's Chapel*, at which General Washington, then President, was present. When the Handel and Haydn Society was formed in 1815, seven of its earlier concerts were given in *King's Chapel.*

The later ministers have been Rev. F. W. P. Greenwood, settled 1824, died 1843; Rev. Ephraim Peabody, settled 1846, died 1856; Rev. Henry Wilder Foote, settled 1861, died 1889. The present minister was installed in 1895. These men have all belonged to the Unitarian fellowship; and the church, while entirely independent in every respect, is commonly spoken of as a Unitarian church. It may be noted that the vestments of the minister remain the same as when the church was founded, and are a copy of the dress of the Episcopal clergy of that period. Strangers often ask to see the pew of Oliver Wendell Holmes. It was No. 102 in the south gallery. Charles Sumner's pew was No. 74.

The full story of the life of this interesting church, and of its later connection with the colonial history of Massachusetts, is told in two volumes published by Little, Brown & Co., called the "Annals of King's Chapel," by Henry Wilder Foote.



THE FIRST KING'S CHAPEL.

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